# THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • WEDNESDAY • OCTOBER 30, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 22 • LATE CITY EDITION

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**After India, now Brazil opts out of China's Belt and Road Initiative**

Brazil has decided not to join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), becoming the 2nd BRICS member after India to opt out of the project. Brazil, headed by President Lula da Silva, will instead seek alternative ways to collaborate with Chinese investors. Brazil wants to 'take the relationship with China to a new level, without having to sign an accession contract', Celso Amorim, special presidential adviser for international affairs, told Brazilian newspaper O Globo. India was the first BRICS country to publicly oppose BRI

# Charles, Camilla on secret B'luru trip for treatment

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS & RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

KING Charles III is on his first secret visit to Bengaluru after his coronation as king of the United Kingdom on May 6, 2023, at Westminster Abbey, London. He arrived in Bengaluru on October 27 and will be at the Soukya International Holistic Health Centre (SIHHC) in Whitefield for wellness treatment till Wednesday night, when he is expected to fly to London.

EXPRESS EXCLUSIVE

Sources privy to his secret visit informed this newspaper that King Charles arrived in Bengaluru directly from Samoa where he attended the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting from October 21-26.

His visit to Bengaluru was strictly kept under wraps and he was directly taken to SIHHC where he was also joined by his wife Queen Camilla.

According to sources, the couple's day begins with a morning yoga session, followed by breakfast and rejuvenation treatment before lunch. After a brief rest, a second round of therapies follows, ending with a meditation session before dinner and lights out by 9 pm. They have been enjoying long walks around the campus, visiting the organic farm and cattle shed.

Charles and Camilla on one of their previous visits for wellness treatment | SOURCE: SIHHC

Considering the high-profile secret visit, a high-security ring was thrown around SIHHC.

The health centre, founded by Dr Issac Mathai, is located in Samethanahalli, Whitefield, on Bengaluru's outskirts. This integrative medical facility combines traditional systems of medicine, including Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Yoga, and Naturopathy, along with over 30 complementary therapies like Reflexology, Acupressure, Acupuncture and Dietetics.

Although this is his first visit as a monarch, Charles has visited the centre on nine earlier occasions, and celebrated Deepavali on three occasions there. The royal couple has earlier taken wellness treatments, including anti-aging, detoxification and rejuvenation.

On November 14, 2019, the couple celebrated the then Prince Charles' 71st birthday at SIHHC, an event which attracted a lot of publicity unlike this visit.

Formerly the Prince of Wales, Charles became King after the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, 2022.

# India to fine GE over fighter jet engines delay

Delivery schedule running late by two years; first batch expected by March 2025

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

THE Centre has decided to impose penalties on US manufacturer GE Aerospace for delays in the delivery of jet engines for Indian Air Force's indigenous light combat aircraft, Tejas Mk-1A. The government is also tightening the procurement norms to safeguard the sensitive details of defence contracts, highly placed sources told this newspaper.

The penalty clause against GE Aerospace has been invoked for the delay in the supply of GE-404 engines contracted by India for the Mk-1A series. All defence contracts carry a penalty clause to make the contractor follow a fixed timeline; in case of breach of this timeline, they will have to pay a reasonable compensation.

Sources said GE Aerospace shifted delivery schedule multiple times, cumulatively leading to a delay of two years.

The delivery was supposed to start in 2023; it has now been pushed back to March 2025, going by GE's latest schedule.

GE has been contracted to manufacture and deliver 99 jet engines (GE-404) and not even one has been delivered, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) sources told this newspaper. The deal, signed between HAL and GE Aerospace in 2021, was worth $716 million.

Flagging the inordinate delays, Chief of Air Staff A P Singh said in October: "It is a known fact that Tejas has been delayed. There is no doubt. There is also a promise that the production rate will be increased to 24 aircraft per year. If that promise is kept, the delays can be caught up with. The first aim is not to let our aircraft strength go down."

**WAY PAST DEADLINE**

Air Force ordered 83 LCA Tejas Mk1As from HAL for ₹46,000 crore in 2021; delivery was to start in March 2024 but delayed due to non-receipt of engines from GE

Sources in the know said the delays are purely a logistics matter involving GE Aerospace, which is facing some issues with its suppliers, and that HAL could not be faulted for this.

The delays were also flagged at the highest levels with Prime Minister Narendra Modi raising the issue during his visit to the US in September.

The government is also working on a new procurement system to protect sensitive information. "We are working to get hold of a model so that we are not hauled to courts and asked to reveal national secrets," a senior official told this newspaper.

# CM sets ₹10K cr monthly tax collection target

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah, who has been under pressure to shore up revenues, on Tuesday tasked the officials with meeting the state's commercial tax collection targets. At a review meeting, the CM underscored the need for achieving the targets to support the development goals of the state.

The meeting focused on the progress of tax collection towards achieving the annual target of Rs 1,10,000 crore for the financial year 2024-25. As of October end, collections stand at Rs 58,773 crore, marking 53.5% of the target. This includes GST of Rs 44,783 crore, Karnataka Sales Tax of Rs13,193 crore and Professional Tax of Rs 797 crore. Collections have increased by Rs 5,967 crore compared to the same period last year. To meet the yearly goal by March, an average monthly collection of Rs 10,200 crore has to be achieved for the remaining five months, he said.

He called for enhanced coordination among various departments and said, "Achieving the target is essential for the state's development." He committed to conducting monthly review meetings and said the officials who fail to meet their targets will be held accountable. The Karasamadhana scheme is expected to add Rs 2,000 crore more to the state's revenue.

EXPRESS READ

**RBI moves 102 tonne gold to Indian vaults**

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India added 102 tonne to its domestic gold reserves between April and September 2024, taking the total domestic gold holdings to 510.46 tonne. The move is in line with the practice of moving gold kept abroad, to local vaults located in Mumbai and Nagpur | P13

**102 hurt in fireworks mishap at temple fest**

Kasaragod: Revelry gave way to horror on Tuesday after an explosion during a fireworks display at a temple in Kerala's Kasaragod district left 102 people injured, seven of them critically. District Police Chief Shilpa D said permission had not been obtained for bursting the crackers | P5